

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 3149

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR YO US CASC

SUBJ: TOTH AND COMA CASES

1. TOTH CASE: DURING CALL BY ADMIN COUNS OF FSFA DESK
OFFICER KAYYTH

DISCUSS VARIOUS MATTERS, NORTH AMERICAN DIRECTOR
STARCEVIC ENTERED KELIC OFFICE AND ENGAGED IN IMMEDIATE
CONVERSATION WITH ADMIN COUNS. STARCEVIC MOVED QUICKLY TO
DISCUSSION OF TOTH CASE SAYING THAT ADMIN COUNS
"MUST KNOW THAT EMBASSY HAS BEEN PUSHING TOO HARD
ON TOTH CASE. HE SAID THIS PRESSURE WAS COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AND
THAT "VBRAS, FULBRIGHT SCHOLARS, MEAT, CANNED FOODS, ALL OF THESE
THINGS HAVE BEEN AFFECTED." (EXCEPT FOR PROHIBITION ON DEALINGS
WITH PIK VRBAS, PLANT WHERE TOTH SEIZED, WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND
STARCEVIC'S RECITAL.) ADMIN COUNS SAID THAT IT WAS TRUE THAT
USG TOOK MATTER VERY SERIOUSLY. WHEN PRESSED BY ADMIN COUNS
TO EXPLAIN TOTH CASE, WHICH STARCEVIC DESCRIBED AS OFFENSIVE TO
YUGOSLAVS, STARCEVIC INTERJECTED "WHEN ARE YOU LEAVING THE
COUNTRY?" WHEN ADMIN COUNS SAID THAT HIS TOUR OF
DUTY WAS OVER ON JUNE 16, STARCEVIC SAID "I WILL TELL
YOU (ABOUT TOTH) BEFORE YOU LEAVE;" BUT THEN BACKTRACKED
SLIGHTLY AND SAID "I HOPE TO TELL YOU BY THEN OR
BEFORE THEN." HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT PEOPLE IN
VOJVODINA WERE UP IN ARMS ABOUT WHAT TOTH HAD DONE
AND THAT WE SHOULD UNDERSTAND POINT. HE THEN AGAIN
STRESSED HIS PRESSURE-IS-COUNTERPRODUCTIVE THEME
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AND REITERATED THAT THE FSFA WAS WORKING ON IT.

2. COMA CASE: AS REPORTED REFTEL AMCIT MEDI COMA HAS RETURNED TO UNITED STATES AFTER SERVING YUGOSLAV PRISON SENTENCE AND BEING UNABLE TO LEAVE COUNTRY FOR SEVERAL MONTHS WHILE SUP AUTHORITIES IN STRUGA, MACEDONIA, WERE HOLDING HIS PASSPORT. RECALLING THAT BLAGOJ POPOV, PRESIDENT OF MACEDONIA EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, HAD ASSURED AMBASSADOR LAST FALL THAT "THERE WILL BE NO TOTH CASES IN MACEDONIA," AMBASSADOR RECENTLY INSTRUCTED POL COUNS TO CONTACT POPOV AIDE AND REQUEST ACTION ON PART OF POPOV TO FACILITATE RETURN OF COMA PASSPORT. THIS DONE ONLY AFTER SEVERAL INQUIRIES THROUGH FSFA ABOUT COMA CASE HAD ELICITED ONLY THAT "APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES" HAD BEEN CONTACTED AND FSFA WAS WAITING FOR A REPORT. POL COUNS IMPLICITLY LINKED RETURN OF COMA PASSPORT TO UPCOMING POPOV VISIT TO UNITED STATES.

3. SEVERAL MONTHS AGO MOJSOV TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT SOMETHING ON TOTH CASE WOULD SOON BE FORTHCOMING AND THAT HE SHOULD BE PATIENT. NOTHING HAS DEVELOPED SO FAR AND AMBASSADOR SEEKING APPOINTMENT WITH MOJSOV TO DISCUSS TOTH CASE, AMONG OTHER MATTERS. SILONERMAN

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